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# WEATHER & CROP NEWS

Week ending February 1, 2004

Released 4:00 P.M.

February 2, 2004

**WEATHER SUMMARY:** Significant rains near the beginning and again near the end of the week of January 25 through 31, brought from a half inch to over three inches precipitation to all regions. Temperatures for the week averaged normal to two degrees below in the major cities. Daytime highs were in the 60s and 70s with most localities, except for the Panhandle, recording at least one high in the 80s. Nighttime lows were in the 30s, 40s and 50s with several Panhandle and northern Peninsula localities, and some central Peninsula areas, recording at least one low in 20s.

**FIELD CROPS:** Northern producers continue to prepare land for tobacco planting. Sugarcane harvesting is active in the Everglades region. Ample rains over most areas decreased the danger of wild fires and raised soil moisture levels. Most soil moisture is rated short to adequate. Some very short soil moisture, mostly subsoil supplies, exists in spots of Washington, Union, Columbia, Baker and Broward counties. Some areas of Seminole County have surplus subsoil moisture.

Moisture Rating	Topsoil			Subsoil		
	This week	Last week	Last year	This week	Last week	Last Year
	Percent					
Very short	1	5	1	1	5	0
Short	29	30	50	34	25	32
Adequate	69	65	49	64	70	68
Surplus	1	0	0	1	0	0

**VEGETABLES:** The rains curtailed some planting and harvesting during the week. Potato planting is active around Hastings with some fields planted later than normal due to a lack of early contracts for chipping types. Northern producers are preparing land for spring crop vegetable planting. Cabbage, broccoli and Asian vegetable harvesting remains active in the Hastings area. Other vegetables available include snap beans, celery, sweet corn, cucumbers, eggplant, endive, escarole, lettuce, peppers, radishes, squash and tomatoes.

**LIVESTOCK AND PASTURES:** In the Panhandle, the impact of the cold weather on cool season forages was offset by the rain. In the northern areas, cool season forage is making slow growth due to the cool weather with recent rainfall relieving some stress. Supplemental feeding of livestock is active. The condition of oats forage is reduced in some locations by disease. Statewide, the condition of cattle is mostly fair.

Condition	Range		Cattle	
	This week	Last week	This week	Last week
	Percent			
Very poor	5	5	0	0
Poor	15	15	5	10
Fair	55	40	60	35
Good	25	40	35	55
Excellent	0	0	0	0

**CITRUS:** Typical winter weather occurred during the week with cool nights and moderately cool days. Late in the week, a weak low pressure system moved over the State bringing slow, steady rainfall to almost all citrus areas. Temperatures were in the mid to low 30s in some locations mid-week with light to moderate frost reported as far south as Polk County. No damage was reported. Rainfall through the weekend totaled up to one and one half inches in some locations. With the colder weather, trees are hardy and should withstand any later cold weather. Some growers are starting to fertilize groves in anticipation of springtime new growth emerging. Most fresh fruit packinghouses are packing all available varieties with emphasis on the export of grapefruit increasing. Varieties being packed include oranges (Navels, Hamlins, Pineapple, and Valencia), white and colored grapefruit, Honey tangerines, tangelos, and Temples. Processing plants are open to receive and process fruit on a continuous basis with weekly volumes of oranges beginning to decline as grapefruit amounts increase.

Crop	Estimated boxes harvested week ended		
	Jan 18	Jan 25	Feb 1
Navel oranges	65,000	39,000	22,000
Early and Mid oranges	8,442,000	8,465,000	7,245,000
Valencia oranges	16,000	19,000	42,000
Grapefruit	1,481,000	1,357,000	1,399,000
Early tangerines	32,000	7,000	4,000
Honey tangerines	166,000	109,000	99,000
Tangelos	46,000	33,000	23,000
Temples	58,000	69,000	95,000

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In cooperation with the Florida Cooperative Extension Service whose county directors participate in supplying field information.